

15 firms commit to cut salt, sugar and fat in their products

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Food regulator urges companies to reformulate products voluntarily

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Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), on Tuesday launched a multi-sectoral initiative called the Eat Right Movement, urged all packaged food companies to voluntarily reformulate their products to reduce salt, sugar and fat levels before the new labelling regulations are implemented.

Companies including HUL, Nestle India, Baggry's, Britannia, FieldFresh Foods (Del Monte), Marico, MTR, Patanjali, Halidram, ITC, Kellogg's, Kraft Heinz India, Bikano, MTR and Wiekfield have already come on board with their commitments.

New labelling regulations

Pawan Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI said, "It will take atleast a year to implement the new labelling regulations as the industry will require time to make a transition. It is an opportune time for packaged food makers to voluntarily reformulate their products to reduce salt, sugar and fat levels in their products."

FSSAI is in the process of finalising the new labelling regulations that propose front of the pack labels and red colour coding for products high in salt, sugar and fat. "It is important to recognise that public health is far more important than anything else," he added.

Suresh Narayanan, CMD, Nestle India said, that the company has already been working for many years on reducing sodium, sugars and saturated fats and adding healthy ingredients such as whole grains, vegetables and micro nutrients in its products.

"Over and above the reduction achieved in the past years, we are committed to an average 6 per cent reduction in added sugar, an average 10 per cent reduction in salt and about 2.5 per cent reduction in total fat in our relevant product categories by 2020," he added.

Similarly, Britannia said that while it has continuously been working on making its portfolio nutritious, it will further reduce sugar and sodium by 5 per cent, per serve size, across its product portfolio in the next three years.

In its pledge HUL said, by 2020, 75 per cent of its food portfolio (by volume) will meet salt levels to enable intakes of 5 gm per day, which is a benchmark consistent with the WHO's recommendations.

ITC said it is targeting a total reduction of 10 per cent in salt in three-fourth of its current snacks and instant noodles portfolio in a phased manner by 2023 from the current levels.

It has made similar commitment for reduction in added sugar levels in three-fourth of its biscuits and beverage portfolio by 2023.

Kellogg India aims to reduce sugar on an average by 10-15 per cent and sodium by 10-30 per cent in its ready-to-eat cereals by 2020.

Meanwhile Patanjali said it is will continuously work towards evaluating its portfolio and reformulating its products to reduce sugar, fat and sodium. It also said it will be developing a sugar-free chyawanprash for diabetic patients and will also try and cut down sugar levels by 3-5 per cent in its existing Chywanprash product.